United Nations A/50/PV.27

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

27th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 10 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ould Lekhal (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Trade and Industry, Foreign Affairs and National Security of Grenada

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Trade and Industry, Foreign Affairs and National Security of Grenada.

Mr. Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Trade and Industry, Foreign Affairs and National Security of Grenada, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Trade and Industry, Foreign Affairs and National Security of Grenada, Mr. Keith Mitchell, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Mitchell (Grenada): The world is aware that the fiftieth session of the General Assembly marks a major milestone in the global events that have charted and guided international affairs. My delegation is pleased to be a part of this world Organization.

My delegation wishes to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal on his election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We take this opportunity also to thank Mr. Amara Essy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, for his exceptional performance in the conduct of the proceedings of the forty-ninth session.

My delegation wishes to make due mention of the efforts and achievements of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. His optimism as he confronts the challenges that face this Organization and his determination in his will to find solutions to many of the daunting problems of a world fraught with political, economic and social changes have contributed, in a large measure, to the successes and gains recorded by the United Nations.

The success of the United Nations Mission in Haiti is one achievement to celebrate, when the duly-elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was reinstated following the removal of the military almost a year ago. Democracy and the rule of law and order are of paramount importance to the peoples of the Caribbean region who cherish freedom, justice and law and order. Grenada continues to support United Nations initiatives undertaken in collaboration with other hemispheric organizations to build on the processes that are being put in place to ensure sound social and economic development where democracy can flourish.

95-86280 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Grenada applauds the ongoing process of democratization in South Africa and supports the initiatives undertaken by the South African Government, assisted by the international community, to enhance the lives of its entire population.

Grenada welcomes, too, the building of the peace process in the Middle East with the expansion of Arab control over Arab settlements within the West Bank, although it is recognized that much work has yet to be done if we are to see lasting peace in that region.

My delegation is hopeful that similar attempts at peacemaking in the Balkans will result in bringing the warring parties together to work out a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

The world stands at the threshold of a new era, a time of great challenges and a time of significant promise. The choices that we make will determine whether we experience economic, social and political successes or failures. The international economic environment is rapidly being transformed as new centres of economic power and new partnerships are established. Indeed, these new economic realities have important implications for the survival of small and vulnerable economies such as Grenada's, which are so heavily dependent on a favourable external environment.

It can hardly be disputed that the traditional economic and trade relations on which Grenada relied for so long are now being threatened and could shortly cease to exist. The process of adjustment to the new hemispheric challenges resulting from the entry into force of the North American Free Trade Agreement on 1 January 1994; the conclusion of the Uruguay Round agreements of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade; the establishment of the World Trade Organization; the call for the establishment of a free-trade area of the Americas by the year 2005; and the formation of the Association of Caribbean States will undoubtedly pose challenges which will require adjustments on the domestic level, particularly on the part of our manufacturers.

Furthermore, these recently formed and soon to be established trading blocs will significantly transform the trade policy framework in which developing island economies will have to operate into the twenty-first century. While these will offer us new trading opportunities, particularly in the medium to long term, they will in the short term cause us to face many transitional problems, mainly because of the erosion of preferential access that we now enjoy in major markets of the developed world.

It is in this context, therefore, that Grenada issues a call to the developed world to work with us as we formulate appropriate policy responses to realize the benefits from and adjust to the changes in the global trading system. It is to be emphasized that the new European Union regime for bananas, though not in essence an effect of the Uruguay Round, will result in major losses in export revenue for all the Windward Islands in the Caribbean. Moreover, the challenge of this limited preferential arrangement by some of our closest allies in the developed world is cause for serious concern.

I must remind this distinguished gathering that the issue of bananas has much more than economic significance. Indeed, the heavy dependence on this agricultural commodity by thousands in our islands must — I repeat, must — be underscored.

In fact, the destruction of the banana industry would lead to serious hardships and could constitute a threat to our traditionally sound democratic process. Sustainable human development in our small island States could be severely threatened.

My delegation wishes to make it clear that, while Grenada embraces the philosophy of trade liberalization, tolerance and an understanding of our cause on the part of larger economies are necessary. We cannot hope to develop without a significant inflow of technical assistance, foreign capital and technology.

We therefore call on the countries in the developed world to provide us with this much-needed assistance in order to ensure that we can participate effectively in this emerging "New World Trade Order".

My delegation will continue to argue that moves towards global trade liberalization and reciprocity should complement and not obstruct the efforts of less developed countries to implement positive structural reforms. Grenada, for its part, has already commenced the process of substantially reducing import tariffs and other barriers.

What is now sought is a recognition of these initiatives and a negotiating framework in which our ability to achieve greater market access is enhanced, while our economic and financial restructuring can take

place in a manner and time-frame appropriate to our special circumstances.

Grenada continues to support the view that special and preferential treatment cannot continue in perpetuity. But it must be recognized that the special needs of the relatively less developed countries must be taken into account. The challenge, therefore, is how to design an acceptable reciprocal arrangement among unequal partners that will promote prosperity through free trade and integration in our world without endangering the process of sustainable social and economic development. It is crucial, therefore, that the developed countries assist the developing world to create domestic capabilities that will enhance its capacity to draw benefits from trade liberalization and will soften the burden of adjustment to the new requirements of global free trade.

The question of the environment and of sustainable economic development remains at the heart of our concerns. It is also a central issue for small island developing States in particular, and developing countries in general.

If we continue to reaffirm that human beings are at the centre of sustainable development and that they have a right to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature, action must be taken at all levels and, all the more so, at the international level, to facilitate the process. This would ensure that developing countries, and particularly small island developing States, are provided with the know-how and the resources to enable the implementation of the decisions and recommendations arising out of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio in 1992, the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 1994 in Bridgetown, Barbados and the many other significant global Conferences.

The vulnerability of small island States and the threat to our fragile ecosystems were recently manifested by the passage of hurricanes Iris, Luis and Marilyn. Our economic viability and sustainable economic growth are indeed at stake. In this regard, Grenada looks forward to the fulfilment of pledged commitments by developed countries to assist small island developing States achieve sustainable development.

The role of science and technology in development must be underscored. My delegation calls upon developed countries to provide developing countries with the necessary access to biotechnologies to promote and facilitate sustainable economic growth.

Information technology and human resource development are key elements towards social and economic progress — elements which would enable us to improve our productivity and competitiveness in priority areas as we move into the twenty-first century.

The United Nations was created by men of vision, courage and foresight who understood the need for cooperation among nations and for hope over despair. Undoubtedly, the United Nations, in its "Agenda for Development", has succeeded in bringing to the world's attention the need for a re-evaluation of the role of the United Nations in development, taking into account such critical issues as the empowerment of women, the alleviation of poverty and hunger and the link between development and population, human rights and the creation of an environment for world peace and security.

The social forces of poverty are among the leading causes of environmental degradation and a significant contributor to the loss of biological diversity. Poverty and unemployment also contribute to greater social problems, among which is the illicit traffic in narcotics. Efforts to eradicate the traffic in illicit drugs can have little effect at the national and international levels unless commitments are made and agreements are entered into to develop programmes aimed at the alleviation of poverty.

My delegation is hopeful that the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in March this year, will embrace those principles which call for social inclusion and which facilitate the development of strategies to ensure that youth, the disabled and the elderly play a more meaningful role in social and economic development.

Indeed, the Fourth World Conference on Women, which ended only last month in Beijing, has given impetus to the need for programmes that speak to the issues of women in development and, most critically, the empowerment of women in local communities, enabling their full participation at all levels in the process of national development.

Grenada is encouraged by the new spirit of international cooperation built on a shared partnership between multilateral financial institutions and Governments. However, the models suggested for

economic development have not been sufficiently tested and are often ill-suited to meet the needs of the society in which they are applied, sometimes resulting in disastrous social and economic consequences.

While we seek to put in place all the necessary measures to ensure the efficient and effective management of our domestic affairs, we strongly urge multilateral institutions to include in these models for development a component that provides skills training and, in particular, training in the use of technologies to enable young people to find productive employment in the private sector and to facilitate the process towards equitable social and economic development.

My delegation also supports the United Nations response to security and international humanitarian needs and encourages greater emphasis on human-rights monitoring.

We live in an era of changing norms and of emerging nations and democracies, where no institution or country can stand alone. In this connection, the reforms currently being undertaken within the United Nations system should yield more positive results — greater collaboration and cooperation on issues, rather than confrontation and disunity. New, emerging economic nations or Powers are eager to take their rightful place in institutions and agencies once dominated by traditional super-Powers.

Grenada also believes that in this era of reform and restructuring within the United Nations due consideration should be given to a composition of the Security Council that reflects the geopolitical and economic realities of our time.

On this auspicious occasion, as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, let us reaffirm our commitment to the principles of the Charter which guides this Organization. Grenada not only wishes to emphasize adherence to these principles, but has worked to establish conditions under which all peoples may exercise their equal and inalienable rights.

In his opening statement the President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session stated:

> "the United Nations has ceased to be an intergovernmental organization with a limited membership and has become the only international organization that is universal. Efforts must be made to ensure that all States that are not yet Members should seek to be admitted in the near future. For the same reason, the most serious penalty imposed on a Member State should never be expulsion, but rather suspension"

for an indefinite period

> ", for the United Nations must, as a matter of principle, include all the world's countries." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 1st meeting, p. 7)*

But as we meet today the Republic of China on Taiwan and its more than 21 million people remain excluded from participation and representation in the United Nations. It is on the basis of that principle of universality that Grenada urges all Members to consider that, in renewing our oaths, we should forthwith seek to right this wrong. The inclusion of the Republic of China will be an added contribution to global cooperation in fields such as trade, economic development, environmental protection, sustainable development and multilateral efforts to fight drug trafficking. Moreover, the Republic of China is committed to the promotion of international development assistance to developing countries.

Grenada wishes to urge again that an ad hoc committee be set up at the earliest possible time to consider the special case of the Republic of China on Taiwan and respond positively to its wish to join this world Organization.

My delegation is confident that improved cooperation between developed and developing countries and the consolidation of related agencies and programmes would lead to enhanced prospects for the discovery of solutions to global problems and for the promotion of sustainable economic, social and cultural development.

As we look forward to celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Untied Nations, and as individual nations formulate plans and strategies to move into the twenty-first century, which poses as many challenges as it presents opportunities, let us recommit ourselves to the noble principles of the Charter, guided by the spirit of partnership and cooperation, ever united in our efforts to achieve peace, democracy and prosperity for all our peoples.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the

Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Trade and Industry, Foreign Affairs and National Security of Grenada for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Keith C. Mitchell, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Trade and Industry, Foreign Affairs and National Security of Grenada, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): The next speaker is the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs, Trade, Industry and CARICOM Affairs of Saint Lucia, His Excellency Mr. William George Mallet, on whom I now call.

Mr. Mallet (Saint Lucia): The island State of Saint Lucia shares the sense of history and the mantle of responsibility that falls over the General Assembly on this, the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the United Nations. We must exult in the realization that a vague dream of peace in the aftermath of a world war has in five decades firmed into a solid commitment by 185 nations to shoulder the burden of the global community, embracing every aspect of life around the world.

The elevation of Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session is a distinct honour to his country and a timely recognition of the high esteem in which he is held by his colleagues in the international arena.

During this dramatic and exciting half century the General Assembly has had its task cut out for it as it has been called upon to deal with disruptions arising from human failing, and often from human folly, which have threatened to obstruct the path towards the fulfilment of the ideals of the United Nations. However, some of the Organization's finest moments have occurred in this half century — none more historic than when we presided over the liquidation of apartheid and saw established the multiracial State of South Africa. We have seen the end of the conflict in Namibia, with the hope that this brings for the economic and social progress of its people. We have monitored the collapse of the Berlin wall. We have seen democracy in Haiti. We have been able to deter aggression aimed at fulfilling territorial ambitions, even while we have been able to encourage the prospects for peace in the Middle East.

Any inclination that we may have nurtured towards self-congratulation is, however, arrested by events like the slaughter in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda, the "ethnic cleansing" operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the seeming difficulty of ending the conflict. We are reminded by these events of the task that still lies ahead of us in fulfilling the dream of a better world.

Mr. Peerthum (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We take pride in speaking of the equality of Member nations irrespective of size, and indeed have gone a long way towards ensuring such equality. We have admired how extremely large and very small nations have had the opportunity to contribute equally to the deliberations of the Assembly and to its decision-making process. There are however a number of impediments which still militate against smaller nations such as ours.

The confrontational posture of the cold war had given a strategic prominence to small States, then useful as pawns in the global chess game between super-Powers. Now that the small States have outlived their usefulness as honest brokers in the super-Power game, the altered political circumstances have left them stranded and marginalized.

The pious promises of the developed world to allocate a minuscule percentage of national income to the provision of aid for the developing world have shrunk to non-fulfilment; the thought of the strong economies helping the weak has shrivelled like a raisin in the sun.

Saint Lucia has experienced a dramatic decline in grant assistance — by almost 50 per cent between the financial years 1993-1994 and 1994-1995; but we can ill afford to sit around and merely moan. We recognize and accept that we must use the fact of diminished aid to increasingly spur on our own efforts towards greater efficiency and increased productivity. But in striving towards the achievement of this end, we find ourselves up against multinational trading interests intent on adding to the maw of their already well-nourished entities the morsels of trade on which the survival of our economy depends.

The European Union banana regime came into force in June 1993 as part of the process of creating a single European market, replacing a series of long-standing national arrangements between individual member States and traditional banana suppliers. The United States itself has led the way in instituting various national and international arrangements in the interests of its own

farming community. The existing banana regime seeks to ensure that demand for bananas across the European Union is satisfied, while at the same time providing traditional suppliers of bananas to Europe from developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific with continued access to the European market at viable price levels. In doing so the European Union fulfils a legal commitment under the Lomé Convention, that is that the introduction of the single market should place traditional suppliers in no worse a position than in the past.

That is achieved by a combination of tariff quotas and licences which ensure that suppliers from the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP) maintain — but cannot increase — their market share of approximately 15 per cent of the total European Union demand for bananas. This facility is not aimed at victimizing United States firms or indeed firms of any particular nationality. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that over 60 per cent of the European Union's market demand for bananas is satisfied by fruit imported from Central and South America, principally by three United States multinationals. It is important to note that the Caribbean's share of the world market for bananas is a paltry 3 per cent compared to the more than 70 per cent share of dollar bananas, mostly controlled by these multinationals.

There is general nervousness and a creeping instability threatening the Caribbean banana-growing States resulting from the decision of the United States Trade Representative to pursue Section 301 action in response to an application by Chiquita Brands International and the Hawaii Banana Industry Association challenging the European banana import regime. We have since been advised that the United States Government is to pursue a complaint against the regime within the World Trade Organization (WTO). Since the banana industry accounts for about 50 per cent of the domestic exports of the Windward Islands and around 90 per cent of all agricultural earnings in Saint Lucia and Dominica, it is indisputable that the collapse of the industry which would accompany any tampering with the regime would have a disastrous impact on the economies of these very small countries.

In addition, the interdependence of Caribbean Community (CARICOM) trading arrangements would, in the circumstances, produce a ripple of economic downturn and accompanying social unrest and political instability throughout the CARICOM region. The resulting prospect of massive unemployment, displaced family wage earnings and an escalation in criminal and drug activity is too horrific to contemplate. The Caribbean must call on the good sense and high ideals of this body to use whatever influence it has at its disposal to avert this looming danger. The United Nations may well consider it useful to develop a framework of international review and regulation with respect to the activities and policies of transnational corporations, which are becoming increasingly influential actors on the world scene.

There is little need to emphasize the openness and vulnerability of Caribbean economies. We are exposed to the fury of natural disasters, as was evidenced by the havoc wrought by Tropical Storm Debbie, from which Saint Lucia is still recovering; the recent demolition of Antigua and Saint Kitts by Hurricane Luis; and the devastation of St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. Maarten and Dominica by Hurricane Marilyn.

With severe limitations of size and resources, we are now called upon to come to terms with changes brought about by the process of liberalization and its requirement to be competitive globally; we are therefore forced to diversify our interests in reaction to the liberalization and deregulation processes which are taking place in the international marketplace. The classical response calls for restructuring aimed at economic diversification, accompanied of course by increasing efficiency and productivity.

In terms of diversification the services sector holds attractions. In this context many of our countries are anxious to explore the field of offshore financial services to enhance the Governments' revenue base. We are, however, alert to the dangers associated with that sector and, while pursuing the benefits to be derived from such institutions, we must be ever on guard for white-collar criminals who, as part of their everyday activity, launder their ill-gotten gains through the international financial systems, using both public- and private-sector capital projects for this purpose. Quite often the strategies employed by quasi-investors to launder their wealth are both innovative and sophisticated and require equally sophisticated systems to deal with their ingenious malpractices. Our growing States are not yet able to acquire the kind of resources to engage in a full-fledged war against such nefarious institutions.

Admittedly, the 1988 United Nations Vienna Convention has sought to criminalize the laundering of money derived from the illicit drug trade. But it is crucial that our countries in the Caribbean area take a positive stand to enforce the law and protect our communities from these destructive practices. In this context,

international financial institutions should use their influence, through moral suasion, to encourage member countries, as a matter of urgency, to adopt the measures necessary to achieve the objectives of the 40 recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force. In the Caribbean area our CARICOM colleagues will no doubt embrace the nineteen recommendations of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force.

In the course of the year, our country attracted some attention in respect of irregularities surrounding the use of the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund. We did not flinch from the costly decision to appoint a full commission of inquiry in our anxiety to ensure the fullest possible accountability. In these trying times, when cynics are ready to decry the achievements of the United Nations and besmirch its idealism, it is the bounden duty of all Member States to wash off the stains of calumny and allow the ideals, principles and performance of this illustrious body to continue to inspire the world. The Phillips Commission cleared both the Saint Lucia Government and the organs of the United Nations of any complicity or blame in the affair. This experience, however, points to the need for being on constant guard against those who without scruples would seek to compromise the traditions and the integrity of government and of this body.

The end of the cold war has left many countries stranded on the beachhead of marginalization. In the context of the Caribbean, we are learning to deal with our isolation by exploring new internal alliances designed to foster pride in our patrimony, reduce our vulnerability, pool our human resources and intensify our self-reliance. The logic of this internationalization is to strengthen the links between us in the Eastern Caribbean, within the context of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), even while we consolidate the process of the closer integration of the Caribbean Community. The circle of integration expands in a growing relationship with countries in the wider Caribbean basin and the countries of Latin America. This new thrust of integration has found expression in the recently established Association of Caribbean States, which links the countries of Central and South America, as well as other Caribbean countries such as Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Cuba. We will, however, within the Lomé Convention, maintain our long and valuable historical links with Europe even while, by implementing the decisions of the Summit of the Americas, we seek to expand and consolidate our hemispheric ties.

This new Caribbean initiative has much to recommend it. The concept cuts clear across the barriers of race, language and culture to establish a market of 204 million people with an annual trade volume of $180 billion and establishes a regional base from which competitive strength may be developed for dealing in the global arena.

In the case of Haiti, we can now look hopefully forward with new confidence to the restoration of democracy in an environment of peace and stability. The new setting should pave the way for the Haitian people's achievement of economic, social and political well-being. The re-establishment of democratic order leaves Haiti poised to play a greater role, in concert with its CARICOM colleagues, in helping shape the new international order. The United States of America, the CARICOM grouping and the United Nations itself can feel satisfied over and take pride in the fact that their sustained interest and cooperation have led to the promotion of Haiti's rehabilitation and economic development. Saint Lucia renews its commitment to support the consolidation of the hard-won gains in Haiti in the hope that the country will finally enjoy the fruits of democracy, with full respect accorded the inalienable rights of its people.

In the case of Cuba, we are firmly convinced that the cause of democracy can best be served by the diffusion of its values through association and example and not in a process of isolation. That is why Saint Lucia joins its Caribbean colleagues in calling for an end to the economic blockade of Cuba so as to allow that Caribbean country the flexibility to develop the creativity of its people and pursue its Caribbean destiny.

The winds of change which blew across Africa in the fifties were fuelled by a strong pan-Africanism. It is generally known that the ideas which generated the liberation struggles in Africa came out of the cross-fertilization of the ideas of African and Caribbean thinkers. Caribbean thinkers like Saint Lucia's Nobel laureate, Sir Arthur Lewis, and others, such as C.L.R. James and George Padmore, were strong influences on persons like Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta and Sékou Touré. This historic link between the Caribbean and Africa must continue, especially at a time when the entire international community is deeply concerned about the critical economic and political conditions in Africa as a whole. Our Secretary-General has openly expressed his deep concern for the problems of Africa and the need for this body to give them its urgent consideration.

At its fiftieth session, the General Assembly must act in concert with the Secretary-General in giving high priority to programmes of action for African recovery and development. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s must be pursued urgently and vigorously. In this anniversary year, Saint Lucia will pursue a conscious policy of establishing diplomatic relations with a number of African countries, with a view not only to stimulating trade and cultural exchanges, but, indeed, to recovering and stimulating that vital interchange of ideas.

Saint Lucia is strongly supportive of the peace process in the Middle East, which started with the signing on 4 May 1994 of the first implementation agreement of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The second phase of the agreement was signed on 28 September this year. The agreement between Israel and Jordan has deepened the process considerably. It is our fervent hope that the skirmishes between the Palestinians and the Israelis will not derail the peace process in the Middle East. We further urge the countries of the region to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons for the long-term stability and development of the region.

In preceding sessions of the Assembly, my country has drawn attention to the Republic of China on Taiwan's request to take its rightful place within this family of nations. Our support for this request in no way implies an attack on the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China, nor is it meant to vitiate the intention of resolution 2758 (XXVI).

My country is acutely aware of the need to protect the fundamental principles of our institutions, but it is not beyond the creativity of the Assembly to play a catalyst role in resolving the impasse between the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China. Recent military manoeuvres in the Taiwan Straits provide an eerie warning of the possibility of deteriorating relations between the two countries. The Assembly should not wash its hands of the issues like Pilate, but should exhaust the possibilities of preventive diplomacy rather than live to bemoan the tragedy of inaction.

Saint Lucia continues to be of the view that Taiwan's presence in the United Nations will help to further the goals and ideals of our Organization. Saint Lucia's support for Taiwan's bid for a seat in this body is in the knowledge that this does not preclude the eventuality of reunification.

As we stand on the threshold of a new century, at the very same time as we are presented with an anniversary opportunity to look back on a half-century of United Nations activity, two vital processes loom large in the perception of small States. These processes are disarmament and decolonization.

It is our wish that the process of arms reduction continue to gain momentum and to stabilize at a level that will ensure the easing of tensions and conflicts whenever and wherever they are waged around the globe. Attention must be focused on those countries which devote large slices of their national budgets to arms purchases and production while numerous areas of the world languish in poverty and disease. Civil and external wars could occur in regions where the possession of advanced weaponry, such as medium-range missiles with chemical, biological or even nuclear warheads, by ambitious and threatened regimes becomes a potentially lethal prospect. The search for peace is the most compelling rationale for the existence of the United Nations, and the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, together with complete disarmament and the total eradication of chemical weapons, will be the greatest global contribution to a new world order. Saint Lucia has already ratified the Treaty of Tlatelolco for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

With regard to the process of decolonization, the target date of the year 2000 set by the United Nations for the total eradication of colonialism is to be borne in mind. In this context, the United Nations should continue to promote the idea that referendums and other forms of popular consultation on the future status of the Non-Self-Governing Territories are appropriate means of ascertaining the wishes of the people in this matter.

As the United Nations has grown in scope and complexity over these past 50 years, so too have the problems and complexities assumed new dimensions. We have seen floods of refugees escaping civil wars all over the globe, but now we are faced with the prospect of environmental refugees fleeing from disaster areas and natural catastrophes. Without wishing to sound like a prophet of doom, I must say that the possible effect of global warming upon agriculture in the developing world is a further cause of concern. In recent months we have faced the relentless fury of hurricanes, rising sea levels and, in the case of Montserrat, one of our small Caribbean island neighbours, the threat of volcanic eruption.

We appreciate that these unfolding problems have not escaped the attention of the United Nations. The forty-second session of the General Assembly designated the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and a Plan of Action was adopted in May 1994 by the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction. Our small countries view the transfer of technology in respect of early warning systems, monitoring devices and up-to-date research on safer construction methods as a matter of urgent priority. While we are grateful for the short-term assistance given to such disaster areas, it is vital that we should also focus on the long-term goals of preparedness and prevention.

The question of equitable representation and an increase in the membership of the Security Council was included in the agenda of the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly, in 1979, the same year Saint Lucia joined this Organization, and the same year that the membership of the United Nations was tripled, from 51 original members to 152 members.

During the 16 years since 1979 we have been calling for an increase in the membership of the Security Council, especially of developing countries, to reflect the increased membership of the United Nations and the reality of its composition. Repetition is necessary to emphasize the importance of the point that the policy-making arm of the United Nations should reflect the diversity and universality of the membership of this body and uphold the principle of equitable representation that the Charter embodies.

Saint Lucia continues to support the recommendation that the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council should be strengthened. We also support the view that the process of briefing and consultation should be institutionalized, that the privilege of veto should be phased out and that the efforts at developing greater transparency and predictability should continue. Saint Lucia will work with and support the efforts of our regional group and of the Non-Aligned Movement to achieve these objectives. It is our hope that, in this fiftieth year, we shall exercise the courage and willingness needed to bring about the overdue changes and reform of the Council.

Saint Lucia has taken the opportunity of the fiftieth anniversary to reflect deeply on the role of small marginalized States in the family of nations. We have endured the ravages of a colonial past, been exploited by multinational corporations, divided by the sea and hamstrung by a desperate shortage of resources.

Today a new vision unfolds. We cannot hope to conquer worlds as the early Conquistadors did. There are no worlds to conquer, but worlds to recreate. In this recreation of the post-cold-war world, there are disappearing divisions between States once sworn enemies in a drive to adjust to the dictates of the new world economic order. The interdependence of nations is highlighted against the background of diseases which threaten the world, and the potential for destruction of the very environment which guarantees the survival of mankind.

These problems to be resolved must be approached through the collective means available within this body. However, solutions to be effective must take account of differences in size, in resources and in the cultural diversity of those who are to benefit from them.

Practicality must take precedence over mere dogma, and idealism must not be allowed to lose ground to a narrowness of realism that pays little heed to circumstances. Saint Lucia sees the United Nations as a solid bulwark for the creation of a new order. Its commitment to world peace, human rights, gender equality, racial equality and sustainable development for the peoples of the world is the touchstone of our aspirations.

My country stands prepared to assist in the retooling and reshaping of the organs of the United Nations to enable it to face the global challenges which lie ahead of us. These challenges are as demanding of Member States as they are of the organs of the United Nations. Our focus will be to work in concert with our colleagues in the Caribbean Community and our colleagues in the Association of Caribbean States to increase our efficiency and productivity with a view to playing a full role in the international arena. We will explore with other Member States ideas for fostering a new ethos in the international forum, in which size, wealth and influence will be subordinated to the concourse of ideas.

Finally, Saint Lucia will endeavour to join the global search for a more relevant and edifying system of values which will inspire generations of young people to embrace the concerns which five decades ago motivated the founding fathers of this noble Organization.

The Acting President: I now call upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan, His Excellency Mr. Ali Osman Mohamed Taha.

Mr. Taha (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express to the President my warmest congratulations on his election to guide the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that his wealth of experience will make it possible for this session to achieve its noble goals. I should like to pledge the full support and cooperation of Sudan to that end.

Allow me also to express my great appreciation to his predecessor, the President of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, for his immensely valuable contribution to the work of the United Nations. I would also like to commend the Secretary-General for his continuous endeavours in fulfilling his functions.

This session of the General Assembly acquires a special importance because half a century in the lifetime of the Organization calls upon us to pause for contemplation and self-criticism. We should do that because we look forward to the United Nations becoming the body that guarantees peaceful coexistence amongst States, the light that guides States in important issues and the effective instrument for consolidating international cooperation.

The philosophy upon which the United Nations was established was one that aimed at reflecting the progress humanity had achieved towards the state of civilization. However, actual experience has fallen short of that aspiration. In our view, this falling short has been due to certain practices by means of which some have tried to use the Organization as a tool to impose their hegemony and influence, so that their own outlook and values may become the sole, compulsory statute of the international community, regardless of any diversity of cultures, beliefs, or heritage. It behoves us to agree, however, that our world is made up of a fabric of diversity, and that such diversity, at no time in history, has been a source of conflict but, rather, a source of rich and valuable contributions to the gains made by mankind. Instead of undermining that diversity or using it as a pretext for strife and conflict, it would have been wiser to make it a basis for constructive dialogue and the consolidation of tolerance and justice in the world.

The United Nations has led humanity towards new horizons in the half century that has elapsed since its establishment. This necessitates a reconsideration of its system and mechanisms, given the vast expansion in its membership, its new responsibilities and the emergence of new international economic and political blocs and systems that were not in existence when the United Nations was founded. Top priority in such an endeavour should be accorded to the need to reform the Security Council, in view of the role expected from it in maintaining international peace and security.

The considerations we have mentioned are compelling reasons for expanding Security Council membership in order to ensure equitable representation of the developing countries. It is also necessary to reform the procedures of the Council, to ensure transparency and clarity in its work, to reform its decision-making mechanism and to develop equitable criteria that would guide its policies and safeguard it against the pitfall of double-standard and the effects of the ambitions of hegemony and domination of any of its members.

The reform of the United Nations should also include reform of the Bretton Woods institutions, which have come to be used as tools for the implementation of strategies that are designed to entrench hegemony over the developing countries. Therefore, the Bretton Woods institutions are required to return to their mandate, which stipulate their role in the promotion of a balanced development and support for the monetary and financial policies of all countries without exception or discrimination. We also concur in the call for a review of those institutions in the light of the economic and financial factors which have come to prevail in today's world as a result of the emergence of new groups and countries whose economic weight enables them to exert considerable influence on international trade and on the flow of financial resources and capital.

Today's world also faces a number of economic and social crises as a result of the fractious economic relations between North and South, the inequitable terms of trade and the ever-expanding gap between rich and poor countries. Those crises are exacerbated by the dominance of consumerism and the undermining of the moral values that uphold the dignity of man and preserve the social fabric. Those are moral values which inspired all cultures and civilizations. Accordingly, the objectives of balanced development should be formulated on a basis of respect for those values and principles in order for these objectives to be conducive to resolving the crises and maintaining balance in social, political, cultural, and economic relations in the world community.

In this regard, we should mention the debt problem that has become a major concern for developing countries, especially the African. The indebtedness of the

African countries had doubled in the past 10 years to a record $270 billion, with a debt-servicing tag that consumes about 35 per cent of the gross national product of those countries. As expected, the heavy debt burden and debt-servicing tag have had serious consequences which impede development efforts and obstruct economic structural reforms.

On the other hand, the industrial countries have taken no responsible initiative to address this problem. Instead, they called for a case-by-case approach on a bilateral basis. This reinforces the impression that the purpose is the imposition of a political agenda. The result has been paralysis of the economies of African States, collapse of their infrastructures, and, consequently the eruption of internal and regional conflicts all over the continent, which have impeded Africa's efforts to achieve growth and internal stability. Therefore, the linking of peace-keeping, humanitarian assistance and long-term sustainable development is a principle that we welcome and support.

Sudan has been following with deep concern the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the Bosnian people have continued to be victims of "ethnic cleansing" and extermination. While we reiterate our support for the people and the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we call upon the international community to continue its efforts to put an end to the genocide that targets this people and we commend the efforts deployed by all those countries that support or are engaged in the search for a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement to this problem.

The situation in the Gulf is of special importance to us not only because it affects our peace and stability, but also because of the deeply rooted historical and cultural ties and relationships which strongly bind my country to that region. We look forward to the return of peace amongst our brothers in the Gulf. In this respect, we have welcomed Iraq's official recognition of the sovereignty and territorial boundaries of the State of Kuwait in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and Iraq's undertaking to cooperate in resolving the outstanding problems between the two States, on the one hand, and between Iraq and the Security Council, on the other. We call on all parties to abide by these measures in order to guarantee Kuwait's legitimate right to existence and sovereignty and the right to security and stability to its people and leadership. By the same token, we call for the lifting of the embargo imposed on Iraq, which no longer has any legal justification as the grounds it was built on no longer obtain. The embargo has now become a political ploy aimed at starving the Iraqi people, humiliating it and fragmenting its territory.

In the same context, Sudan has been following, with great dismay and disapprobation, the continuation of the unjust sanctions imposed on the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, while the Jamahiriya has spared no effort in trying to deal with the dispute over the Lockerbie crisis by every acceptable legal means. It is our opinion that the initiative by the League of Arab States, to which the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya subscribes, is a practical basis for addressing the situation in a manner that would lead to the lifting of the sanctions.

As for the Palestinian question, it is our belief that peace should be based on the criteria of justice and full respect for all the rights of the Palestinian and Arab peoples of the region. Consequently, the return of all the Syrian Golan Heights to Syria, and Israel's full and unconditional withdrawal from southern Lebanon, Al-Quds and all the other occupied Arab territories, are essential requirements for the achievement of any stable lasting settlement.

We are advocates of peace, stability and good-neighbourliness. Our abiding conviction has been that the Horn of Africa is a region that has suffered most, without any objective justification from internal civil strife and instability. We concur with the view that the peoples of the subregion should focus on the need to achieve security and stability. Indeed, this is an objective that we have worked for through many a practical initiative that we put forward as members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and of the International Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD). Notwithstanding the high hopes we had in that direction, the results have fallen short of the very minimum of our aspirations, because some have been seduced by grand strategies whose aim has been the destabilization of the region. It is regrettable that some seem to find it difficult indeed to abide by the behests of international legality or even to respect the norms of international law. It is equally regrettable that such quarters find it difficult to abide by the principles of good-neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence and turn, instead, to subversion and terrorism against my country publicly embrace and give haven to elements of armed opposition.

My country supports the initiatives aimed at promoting and strengthening regional organizations and mechanisms for conflict prevention and settlement, and urges that such mechanisms should adhere to the

objectives they were introduced to achieve and abide by the rules that govern their activities. It is our opinion that the functions of such mechanisms should be, above all else, preventive and that they should discharge such functions impartially. They should intervene in conflicts only when it is necessary to do so, with the consent of the parties concerned, and their activities should be limited to peaceful handling. They should also preserve their regional nature, so that they do not become extensions of other parallel mechanisms or tentacles of strategies that aim at international hegemony.

As regards our immediate neighbours, allow me to reciprocate, and to extend similar greetings to the brotherly people of Egypt, and to express our conviction that only the truth will prevail and that the situation in Egypt will return to its normal course, away from all policies of repression, domination and terrorism. There is no doubt that relations between Sudan and Egypt, inevitably, will return to normal away from the policy of imposition of *fait accompli*, away from the policies of occupation of territory by force and overt support for organized armed terrorism and away from the legitimization of rebellion and sedition.

It is our conviction that the ties of brotherhood and solidarity that, historically, have linked our two peoples, will remain as strong and as enduring as the Nile that flows from Sudan to Egypt. Sudan has very clearly supported the integrity of Egypt within its borders. This has been the position of principle adopted by Sudan towards Egypt, not in words but in deeds that are recorded in the eternal annals of history as when the sons of Sudan gave their lives in defence of Egypt.

As we are renewing the commitment to and desire for peace and coexistence, we call for the resolving by negotiation of all boundary disputes and all problems relating to sovereignty over territories that arise between States. Failing this, there would be no alternative but to seek arbitration by neutral parties.

The word "Islam" is derived from the Arabic word "*salam*" which means "peace". Islam is a religion based on the principles of peace, equality and justice. I do not believe that Islam needs anyone to defend its record: it is history that bears witness to the greatness of the civilizations it gave rise to while the present attests to its contribution to the moral and social progress of men.

God honoured man by making him with His own hand and by ordaining that this fact should for ever be a fundamental reason for honouring man and for upholding his rights. Thus the concept of human rights, which was recently blazoned by some as if it were something that they have just recently discovered, has been part of Islam's teachings for centuries upon centuries. Islam made it part of its charter which guides the believers long before that concept found its way into modern charters.

It is indeed regrettable that such a religion should become the target of a malicious onslaught that aims not only at distorting its image, but also at trying to question its origins and roots. It is all the more disturbing that certain major Powers and societies have found it fitting to participate in this onslaught, without paying heed, it would seem, to the devastating confrontation between the West and Islam the onslaught is trying to provoke. We particularly urge the United Nations not to allow itself to be dragged into such a campaign.

We were pleased by the constructive approach adopted by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in his address to this Assembly and by his call for coexistence amongst different cultures so that they might complement each other in building a healthy human society.

In that connection, we also applaud the statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany before this Assembly and by his rejection of any linking of Islam with terrorism. We hope that other Western leaders will follow suit and ensure that policies on the ground should reflect such a posture. Moreover, the need to avoid attempts at misrepresenting Islam and provoking confrontation with it requires that such positive positions should not be confined to leaders and Governments but should extend also and become reflected in their societies, their mass media and their legal, security and administrative systems.

In conformity with our values and beliefs, which respect women, the State has promoted the position of women in Sudan, has granted them their full rights and has enabled them to reach the highest levels in the constitutional, legislative, and executive branches of Government. In today's Sudan, women constitute 50 per cent of the Government's working force. The percentage of females in the universities and institutions of higher education is more than 60 per cent. Sudan was a pioneer among the countries of the region in the area of empowering woman. Women have been appointed not only to govern provinces, but also to hold leading posts in a number of the ministries of central Government and in the provinces.

Our option in Sudan has been that economic and social development should be founded on our spiritual values, our historical background and our social traditions. Self-reliance has been the major underpinning of this endeavour to achieve development. Although our opting for this path has been under conditions of an inauspicious world climate, yet we have managed to provide food, clothing and various basic services for our citizens.

The participation of the Sudanese citizen in the country's public affairs underscores the approach we have opted for, namely the prevalence of the spirit of consultation — *shura* — so that our citizens may be able to participate actively in the decision-making organs within the federal system. In this context, Sudan has witnessed public elections for various legislative bodies in more than 20 of its 26 provinces. Upon completion of elections in all provinces, elections for the members of the National Assembly will be held, and eventually, the election of a President of the Republic will take place.

At the moment, Sudan hosts about one million refugees, and despite its meagre resources, its Government provides them with material assistance. It is unfortunate that the international community has discontinued its assistance to those refugees, thus leaving the country to bear the brunt of this essentially international responsibility. We call upon the international community to increase its financial assistance to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to meet the essential needs of refugee projects and programmes in Sudan. Failure by the international community to do so will be quite unfair to Sudan, as it would mean that the country is expected to continue to host such a number of refugees while the international community fails to discharge its responsibility towards them.

We come to this session of the General Assembly motivated by good faith, and determination to play fully our role in cooperation with the international family of the United Nations. In so doing, we are inspired by our commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and by our desire to put our capabilities at the service of the common good of mankind and to work for the realization of our aspirations after a new world order that would be characterized by liberty, equality and justice. We hope that the principles set forth in this statement would point the way towards the attainment of the noble goals which the United Nations was created to achieve.

The Acting President: I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, His Excellency Mr. Alpian Allen.

Mr. Allen (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I wish, on behalf of my country, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election as President of the General Assembly. He assumes the presidency on the historic occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Commendation is in order too for His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, for the competence and sensitivity he displayed as he presided over the last session.

Let us also take this opportunity to express to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, our profound gratitude for the efforts which he has made so far to achieve greater flexibility, and for the enhancement of the capability of this world body to meet the new challenges posed by the seismic upheavals taking place in the international arena.

My delegation is supportive of United Nations reform initiatives. We must redouble our efforts to ensure a more efficient United Nations system that will respond effectively to security and humanitarian needs, promote human rights, and build the capacity for sustainable development. Central to our concerns is the importance of ensuring democracy in the United Nations. If this Organization's moral authority is to be preserved in an increasingly democratized world, it is inescapable that its own processes must be made more democratic. It is therefore imperative, as we consider the enlargement of the Security Council, that the existing geographic imbalance be noted, and that the five regions of the world be adequately represented.

My delegation calls for a more effective and efficient United Nations. We are cognizant of the urgent need to address the deteriorating finances of this great Organization. Since the end of the cold war, funds for development in poorer countries have been drastically reduced, and peace-keeping demands now compete for the limited funds available. In his recent report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General revealed that Member States owed the Organization approximately $3.6 billion. Let us all work together to address this issue of arrears, which seriously impairs the effectiveness of the United Nations.

The role of peace-keeping forces will have to be redefined. My delegation is concerned when lightly armed peace-keepers or unarmed aid workers on a humanitarian mission are threatened, taken hostage, harmed, or even killed. To preserve the credibility of all United Nations peace operations, personnel must be protected as they carry out the duties that the international community has sent them to accomplish.

The recently concluded Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, has certainly served to raise the level of consciousness worldwide on the many problems that women still encounter in many countries of the United Nations. It is now evident that, even in those countries where legislation has opened the road to equality and equity, traditional attitudes continue to impede this process.

I am happy to report that in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, women have been given the opportunity to lead. Over 40 per cent of the top administrative posts in our civil service are held by women. Women also have equal access to the political process and enjoy equal pay for equal work. Moreover, my Government amended the constitution to give women citizenship rights equal to those previously accorded only to men.

Adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter and the right to self-determination of the world's peoples remain among the fundamental principles of the Charter. This is reflected in the growing membership of the Organization.

The Republic of China on Taiwan, which was once a Member of this body, still finds itself on the outside, knocking persistently at the doors of our chambers. It is the view of the delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, which we also expressed at the last session, that the time has come for serious consideration to be given to the eligibility of the Republic of China on Taiwan to become a Member of the United Nations. Our position is based on the principle of universality and in accordance with the established model of parallel representation of divided countries. We have recognized the several parts of the former Yugoslavia, and this model should continue to guide our policy.

My delegation believes that the Republic of China on Taiwan is fully equipped to play an expanded role in the world economic arena. Its successful development experience can indeed serve as a reference for developing countries. Not only has the Republic of China on Taiwan achieved economic success but, in a few years, its political system has evolved from one characterized by authoritarian rule into one based on democratic principles. We cannot preach about the universality of the United Nations while at the same time ignoring the aspirations of over 21 million people. It is more than time for the Republic of China on Taiwan to be given the opportunity to make a tangible contribution to the work of the United Nations.

My delegation reiterates its strong commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes among States. The Gulf War is now behind us, but the international community must continue to recognize the potential for conflict that still exists in that part of the world.

In January 1995, the Secretary-General issued a Supplement to his "Agenda for Peace" of 1992, which highlighted new kinds of United Nations operations to deal with the outbreak of ethnic and religious wars within newly independent States. It is the fervent hope of my delegation that a lasting peace will come to the troubled regions of the world, particularly to Bosnia and Herzegovina. One can recall when the despicable system of apartheid was demolished in South Africa, just over a year ago. It therefore behoves us to eradicate such evil thoughts as "ethnic cleansing" from the minds of men in other parts of the world.

Let me take this opportunity to applaud the efforts of the Israeli Government and the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to pursue peace talks despite the efforts of terrorists to derail the process. My delegation fully supports a peaceful resolution of the conflict that has plagued that region of the world for so many years.

The Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was of great importance to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The vulnerability of small island States such as ours is of grave concern and we eagerly look forward to the implementation of the Programme of Action agreed to in Barbados in 1994.

Less than one month ago, the Caribbean region felt the impact of several storms and hurricanes which severely ravaged our sister islands of Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, Saint Maarten, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. In the spirit of Caribbean brotherhood, the entire rest of the region came to the support of those affected. The Prime Minister, Sir James Mitchell, in his capacity as current

Chairman of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), along with Prime Minister Compton of Saint Lucia and Prime Minister Arthur of Barbados, immediately embarked on a tour of the islands which were severely hit.

A national effort was mobilized in my own country for relief supplies. My delegation takes this opportunity to call for further external assistance, which remains crucial. On behalf of the Government and people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, I wish to convey our profound sympathy to the Governments and the peoples of the islands affected, particularly to the families of those who lost their lives as a result of Hurricanes Luis and Marilyn.

We also wish to express our sympathy to the Government and the people of the United States of America, and more specifically the families of those who lost their lives in the senseless bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma earlier this year.

Our small and fragile States are now being threatened by another type of disaster — an economic disaster, with mounting pressures being exerted by very powerful forces which appear not to understand the importance of the banana industry to our very survival. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the other banana producing countries of the Windward Islands are limited to a mere three per cent of the world market trade in the commodity. The powerful multinational companies which are seeking to reverse the special arrangements under the Lomé Convention already control over 80 per cent of the world market.

More profits for multinational companies must not be to the detriment of the small islands striving to maintain democracy. The destruction of the Caribbean banana industry will create economic and social havoc nationally and regionally, and will undoubtedly have severe repercussions at the international level. We recognize the momentum for free trade, but see no reason why, as obtains with issues related to other agricultural regions, of various countries, we cannot be given the time to adjust and restructure our economies.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has already seen its active involvement and participation at the regional level in the Caribbean as an indispensable dimension of its role as a member of the international community. We have consistently defined our objective to become members of our various institutional bodies as a logical and natural culmination of our international vocation. This definition is rooted in our country's political, social and economic realities, as they have been shaped by our historical and cultural heritage.

As a member of the recently established Association of Caribbean States (ACS), we are indeed delighted to be given a greater opportunity to strengthen relations with our Latin American neighbours. Comprising some 200 million ethnically and culturally diverse peoples, the ACS will serve as a vehicle to promote the implementation of policies and programmes designed to harness, utilize and develop the potential of the Caribbean Sea, promote and enhance economic space for trade and investment opportunities, and establish and augment, as appropriate, institutional structures and cooperative arrangements responsive to the various cultural identities within the region.

My Government totally condemns the illicit production, trafficking and consumption of drugs. These harbingers of violent crimes and corruption create a serious menace to the health and well-being of our economies and our people, threaten our democratic institutions, and endanger national and regional security.

We are firmly convinced that only integrated regional and international efforts can effectively address the drug problem, and accordingly stress the need for increased local, regional and international cooperation. Greater emphasis should be placed on programmes that generate employment and income for persons attracted to drug production and trafficking as a means of livelihood.

With the end of the cold war, the international community, freed of the ideological and other constraints of the East-West struggle, saw new opportunities to respond more effectively to longstanding problems that had defied resolution because of super-Power rivalries. There was optimistic talk of the "peace-dividend", and the Security Council acted with unprecedented consensus and momentum on many issues.

At the same time, the thawing of the cold war triggered long-suppressed tensions and conflicts in many parts of the world. Serious global economic and social problems, ranging from poverty, over-population, refugees and migration, to unemployment, drug-trafficking and environmental decline, have affected many societies on an unprecedented scale.

Despite the dramatically diminished threat of a nuclear war, the world of the 1990s turns out to be a far more unstable place than many had hoped. The reality of

global interdependence, while promising new opportunities for cooperation and exchange, reminds us all too often of our shared and persistent problems. We face more tensions in more places: increasing degradation of the quality of human life and even more complex issues of international laws and ethics, management and practical cooperation.

It is therefore clear that the United Nations system is in greater demand than ever before. As we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of this great Organization, let us work in harmony and ensure that the United Nations is adequately prepared to face the challenges of an even more complex world. We must never forget that the United Nations is a reflection of the real world. If an ugly image appears, one should not blame the mirror.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister of External Affairs of the Republic of Mauritius, His Excellency The Honourable Mr. Ramduthsing Jaddoo.

Mr. Jaddoo (Mauritius): It is with much pleasure and great satisfaction that I join the previous speakers who have already congratulated the President on his election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. The participation of his country, Portugal, at the United Nations has always been active and constructive. My delegation, therefore, is confident that under the President's wise and able leadership our Organization will progress further towards its goals. And we assure him of our fullest cooperation and support in the tasks that devolve upon him.

May I take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the President's distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, for the admirable and effective manner in which he conducted the business of the forty-ninth session.

Let me also renew my delegation's homage to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali for the efficient and committed manner in which he is carrying out his mission as Secretary-General.

Every year, we seize the opportunity of the session of the General Assembly to share our views and concerns about the state of international relations. In this fiftieth year of the existence of our Organization, I particularly wish to address the Assembly from the perspective of a small island State.

The end of the cold war and the breakup of the Soviet bloc, the globalization of the world economy and the establishment of the World Trade Organization to oversee international trade, the emergence of China as an economic giant, the liberalization of the Indian economy and South Africa's return to the community of nations, in such a short span of time, have all contributed to rapid changes in the global economic scene.

My country shares the belief that regionalization is a first prerequisite for smooth integration into a global economic pattern. It was natural, therefore, that the region of the Indian Ocean could not remain isolated from the movement towards regionalization, despite the fact that the Indian Ocean countries form a heterogeneous zone with a multiplicity of economic systems, political traditions and cultural experiences. It is in this perspective that Mauritius hosted, in March this year, the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) initiative. Built on the foundations of historic interchanges between nations in the Indian Ocean, the IOR initiative could be seen both as a geographical reality and a natural economic entity. Its objective, as clearly outlined at the first meeting, is to establish a regional forum, tripartite in nature, that will bring together representatives of Governments, business and academia for the purpose of promoting economic cooperation in the region. Although the IOR initiative has been launched with an initial group, may I hasten to add that the IOR is open to all the countries of the Indian Ocean region. As we go along, the initiative will expand progressively to include other countries, on the basis of a coherent programme and plan of action.

Other existing groupings, such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) — to which organization my country has recently been admitted — and the Indian Ocean Commission, have already contributed significantly to greater interaction in our region, and it is our hope that this new initiative will further pave the way for a dynamic integration of the Indian Ocean region into the global economic pattern. In this regard, we look forward to, and will highly appreciate, the support of major regional groups and countries in the implementation of this laudable initiative.

Indeed, while we are making considerable efforts to ensure the prosperity and advancement of our countries, we are also very much aware that this cannot be achieved without the assistance of major players in the global economy. At the same time, it is important that, at a time of growing interdependence among States and economies,

efforts must be made to include developing countries in the international economic decision-making process so as to achieve effective management of the global economy.

The Bretton Woods institutions — namely, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund — should be able to devise new ways and means of responding to the development needs, priorities and specificities of developing countries by providing adequate resources without stringent conditionalities. I should like here to appeal to the international financial institutions to put aside, when circumstances demand, their first and foremost role of bankers and act more as partners in the global development process. For it is becoming increasingly clear that development problems cannot be solved by countries on their own, whatever be their sense of commitment and purpose. Africa, where countries are afflicted by deep-seated and chronic problems, is one such example.

My country, therefore, welcomes the views expressed by the Secretary-General in his Agenda for Development, and in particular supports his *démarches* to alleviate problems and sufferings on the African continent. We wish in this regard to see the rapid implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development in Africa in the 1990s and the Cairo Agenda for Action on Relaunching African Economic and Social Development, as well as the recommendations of the Bandung Asia-Africa Forum. Africa, we know, is not alone, and we were gratified in September last year by President Clinton's statement at the reception for African nations to the effect that

> "The United States has been, and will continue to be, a partner in Africa's success story".

This is comforting, and we wish to see more concrete steps in this direction.

I wish also to seize this opportunity to pay tribute to two decades of partnership between the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific and those of the European Union, through the Lomé Conventions. In a few weeks' time Mauritius will have the privilege and honour of hosting the signing of the second financial protocol of Lomé IV. While I pay tribute to this concrete example of effective partnership between the North and the South, it is our sincere hope that our partners of the European Union will continue to support its traditional friends despite emerging demands nearer home.

Economic and socio-cultural progress cannot be sustained if man does not remain at the centre of development. In this context, education, training and information play a fundamental role. We firmly believe that it is extremely important to invest in human resources. In keeping with this belief, education and training are provided free of charge at primary and secondary levels in my country, to boys and girls and to men and women alike.

An educated and trained individual is in a better position to respond and adapt to the changing needs of society and the developments taking place around him. As such, he is able to provide faster and better results. One of the scourges of developing nations remains an inadequate level of education and the lack of training facilities and access to the latest information. Developing countries, in fact, run the risk of being left outside the network of rapidly evolving information technology. And yet can anyone deny the absolute need for small island States like mine to be connected to the rest of the world through up-to-date information networks? Therefore, while the eradication of illiteracy and the provision of education facilities should continue to remain a top priority of the United Nations, we should add to this the transfer of information technology.

Women are a major agent of development, and they have often been disadvantaged in their quest for education and training. Of course, to the United Nations, the advancement of women is not a new cause. The year 1975 was proclaimed International Women's Year, followed by the United Nations Decade for Women. Since then, major United Nations conferences, such as the Earth Summit, in Rio, the World Conference on Human Rights, in Vienna, and others have repeatedly brought the plight of women to the fore, the most significant being the recent Beijing Conference. The agreements concluded at Beijing recognized the pivotal role of women in our society and laid down the foundations for their participation as equal partners in development activities. More important, however, will be the "after" Beijing — the need to get down to the implementation of decisions arrived at and the need to find ways and means of building the bridges to allow for greater involvement of women in national and international matters.

The world this year befittingly witnessed two other important United Nations conferences: the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in New York.

The Summit on Social Development called attention to the impact of the world economic system on the poor and underprivileged and helped to project new ideas for alternative models of social development. It also allowed the renewal of the world commitment to resolve the problems of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion.

For its part, the non-proliferation Treaty, which came into force in 1970, is important in several ways. It enshrines an undertaking between the five nuclear-weapon States to begin serious nuclear disarmament negotiations and the non-nuclear countries not to acquire nuclear weapons in return for access to peaceful nuclear technology. It is a major international agreement the aim of which is to curb the spread of nuclear weapons and build confidence among the nuclear-weapon States towards a reduction of their arsenals. The Treaty also provides the basis for legitimate trade in nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

The indefinite extension of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty in May this year can be considered a landmark in the history of mankind, which has committed itself to free the world from the threat of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, the optimism generated by the indefinite extension of the Treaty was short-lived in the wake of the resumption of recent nuclear testings. These activities are definitely not encouraging signs for the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty in the foreseeable future.

In our region, however, we are confident that the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, which was recently finalized in South Africa, will go a long way towards contributing to international peace and security. It covers a large part of the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean, both containing major sea routes of the world. My delegation sincerely hopes to see the speedy entry into force of this Treaty, which, among other issues, encompasses the integrality of the territory of States members of the Organization of African Unity as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The Vienna Conference was a turning-point for world perception of human rights. We hope that the principles and objectives enshrined in the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on human rights may in time be recognized and effectively respected in all corners of the world. My country has always upheld human rights and favoured their promotion and protection. But at the same time, in the field of human rights, we believe that we have to move with caution lest we run the risk of damaging the interests of those very individuals and societies that we are purporting to protect in the short run.

Nevertheless, this should not prevent us from combining our best efforts in all good faith to bring about a just and equitable society by trying to win the confidence of the peoples, societies and Governments rather than by threatening them economically, militarily or otherwise. The upholding of human values and uplift of humanity should continue to remain our main concern at all times and in the best interests of humanity. It is for this reason that we should seize every opportunity to applaud the restoration of human rights and democracy, regardless of other considerations. We are delighted, therefore, at the long-awaited liberation of Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi this year, which we feel has opened up new avenues for dialogue in Myanmar.

During the past few years in particular, the United Nations has become increasingly identified in the public perception with the Blue Helmets. The growing focus on the activities of the peace-keepers is such that their successes and failures often affect the credibility of our Organization. Peace-keeping is an important tool for conflict resolution; its success depends to a large extent on a strong political will on the part of Member States, a clear mandate to the peace-keepers and solid material, logistical and financial support. However, one of the main factors for conflict resolution remains the early identification of potential conflicts and tensions. While arms and weapons can be used to threaten and temporarily silence those involved in the conflicts, lasting peace can be achieved only through moral persuasion, the removal of fear and despair, and the instilling of hope and security in the minds of people. The need, therefore, to strengthen the arms of preventive diplomacy becomes imperative.

In the recent past, the United Nations has been increasingly called upon to carry out peace-keeping and peacemaking operations. In fact, the number of demands made on the Organization is now straining its resources almost to the breaking-point. The erratic and reluctant disbursement of contributions by some Member States has highlighted the shortcomings of such operations and exposed the limits of this approach in ensuring peace and stability. We therefore need more than ever to place much greater emphasis on preventive diplomacy and allocate more resources to this activity. We believe that, in the long run, the cost of supporting programmes in

preventive diplomacy would be far outweighed by the actual costs of dispatching Blue Helmets around the world.

In this respect, we urge the international community strongly to support regional initiatives, such as the mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The experience of my country as a result of my own personal participation in several ministerial missions organized by the OAU in the context of this mechanism has convinced us to put greater reliance in this approach. My delegation would therefore like to appeal to this body to make a strong commitment to the realization of this very important programme.

The establishment of an early-warning system and threat-assessment unit at the United Nations could equally support the proposed OAU early-warning system. This would go a long way towards preparing the United Nations to deal with the contemporary challenges of peace-keeping and peace-building at a more realistic cost. Yet I would appeal for more cohesion and harmonization among the various conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution mechanisms in order to avoid duplication of efforts.

(*spoke in French*)

At this point, my delegation should like to refer to the increasing activities of the francophone movement in the areas of conflict prevention and peace-keeping. We welcome the encouraging results of the work of the recent conference of French-speaking countries on conflict prevention, which took place in Canada. Among the recommendations of that conference, we note in particular the one relating to the support of the francophone movement for the pan-African mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution.

It is true that the movement has no great means at its disposal, but it has none the less been able to lend considerable support in the recent past to certain United Nations programme in the area of human rights and the process of democratization. With respect to those two areas, I also wish to highlight the important activities of the movement over the past two years in the countries of the African Great Lakes region following the tragic events that took place there.

In December, at Cotonou, my Prime Minister will be passing on the presidency of the movement to the President of Benin. I wish to take this opportunity to express my great satisfaction at the way in which, during his term of office, the political dimension of the French-speaking movement's work on the international level has developed. I should like to express the hope that this political facet of the movement will in future be able to play a growing role in international forums in striving for the realization of lasting peace in the world.

(spoke in English)

We are already witnessing promising developments in conflict resolution in regions such as Angola, Mozambique and the Middle East. We commend the recent initiatives in Bosnia and exhort all parties concerned to continue to intensify their efforts to find a long-term solution, and hope that the long-awaited peace in this region is achieved not under the threat of guns, but through the goodwill, understanding and tolerance of all concerned.

My delegation recognizes that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations provides a golden opportunity for the re-examination and the renewal of the United Nations system, and welcomes the initiative launched in the General Assembly to negotiate a reform of the Security Council. We believe that the present 15-member composition of the Security Council does not reflect the realities of the economic and political changes of the past decades. In its present composition, the Security Council can neither claim to take into account the positions of nations in the next 50 years, nor reasonably pretend to speak on behalf of 185 nations for the maintenance of world peace and security. The Security Council has indeed the main task of maintaining peace and security. However, the concept of world security has itself undergone a huge transformation. We are now more at risk from the threat of economic, social, cultural and religious upheavals and turmoils than from the outbreak of war resulting from conflicts between States or a group of States. Consequently, if the Security Council is to command full respect in all parts of the world and enjoy legitimacy, it should undergo a complete overhaul.

In the context of the current exercise on the expansion of the Security Council, we believe that the claim of India, the largest parliamentary democracy, to a permanent seat on the Security Council is legitimate. In the same spirit, countries from other regions, including small island States, could equally aspire to permanent seats in an expanded Security Council.

The world has gradually been reduced to a global village. The regions of the world and their peoples, although still widely separated geographically, are fast realizing that the future of the world community lies in a common shared goal. We are increasingly becoming aware that the world is one family, and that if we are to assure a brighter and better future for coming generations, we have no other choice than to continue our efforts towards preserving and promoting a strong United Nations that will be able to pursue a common purpose for a world of equity, justice and shared economic progress.

In Mauritius, in spite of the existence of many cultures and religions, we have been successful in promoting peaceful coexistence. We have always believed that no meaningful progress can be achieved in the absence of peace and harmony. We have always believed in our people and have actively promoted the culture of tolerance and mutual respect. We remain deeply committed to the principles of democracy and justice. The path of tolerance and mutual respect for different faiths and religions and the acceptance of unity in diversity laid down under the inspiring leadership of the Father of the Nation, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, since independence in 1968 and followed through relentlessly by our present Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth have been largely responsible for the harmonious way of life in Mauritius.

In conclusion, I should like on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization to share with the international community our rich experience of living in peace and harmony.

The Acting President: I now call on the Chairman of the delegation of Tajikistan, His Excellency Mr. Rashid Alimov.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) *(interpretation from Russian):* First of all, let me express to His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral my sincere congratulations on his election to the responsible post of President of the General Assembly. There can be no doubt that his rich experience, both in life and in diplomacy, will serve to enhance the productive work of our anniversary session.

Mr. Traoré (Mali), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Five decades ago, having achieved victory over the forces of evil in the Second World War, the international community evinced the wisdom and political will to build together the universal home of peace and common security: the United Nations. And perhaps the main result of the past few decades has been that, with the help of the United Nations, we managed to save the world from another world war. All of us can be proud of that.

Although the "big" war spared us, this in no way diminished the increasing danger of small wars in the world, which have caused intense suffering and misery. Economic and social development in the countries where these wars take place is set back for decades. And although the civil war in Tajikistan is now behind us, it is still necessary to pursue the final settlement of the civil conflict.

It was the dialogue initiated by the Government of Tajikistan, rather than violent confrontation, that began to yield tangible results. A significant role here was played by international interaction and by joint efforts on the regional level.

A perceptible acceleration in the process of dialogue resulted from the meetings between the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Imomali Rakhmonov, and the leadership of the armed opposition in Kabul and Tehran. This incontestably demonstrated our good will and our sincere aspiration for the early achievement of complete stability and accord on Tajik soil.

We are sincerely grateful to the leaders of the Islamic State of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran for their personal contribution in arranging the meetings between the President of Tajikistan, Mr. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the opposition, Mr. Nuri. The efforts of these and other countries acting as observers in the inter-Tajik negotiations tangibly supplemented the mediating activity of the United Nations.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, his Special Envoy, Ambassador Píriz Ballón, and also the regional and intergovernmental organizations that acted as observers at the inter-Tajik negotiations for their substantial contribution to the resolution of the conflict.

The results of these multilateral efforts have already become apparent. Signed by the sides in the middle of August this year, the Protocol on the fundamental principles for establishing peace and national accord in Tajikistan, which contains, *inter alia*, the decision to extend the term of cease-fire agreement until 26 February 1996, has created a solid basis for the

attainment of general agreement for peace and national accord in Tajikistan.

The Government of Tajikistan is in favour of the earliest possible start to an ongoing round of negotiations with the Opposition. We plan to begin this very soon. The intention is that in the course of the forthcoming dialogue the Government and its opponents will agree upon a complete set of issues for a comprehensive peace settlement. A prerequisite for that is that the Opposition agree to act with the Government on a common legal basis. What is important is that, having signed the protocol to which I have referred, the Opposition undertook to conduct its political struggle exclusively by peaceful means and in accordance with current legislation in the Republic of Tajikistan.

We cannot ignore the fact that there are difficulties in this process. Among the representatives of the hard-line wing of the Opposition there are forces whose attitude favours terrorism and political and religious extremism. To achieve their own narrow, selfish ends they are inclined to stick to the policy of keeping strong pressure on the Government. Their arsenal includes terrorist acts, intimidation of people inside the country, constant violation of the Tajik-Afghan border, which is protected by border guards of Russia, Kazakstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, as well as by our own soldiers.

The continuous interference from outside in the inter-Tajik conflict has had a negative impact on the settlement process. Evidence of that is the continuing explosive situation on the Tajik-Afghan border, which tends to destabilize the situation in Tajikistan as well as in all of Central Asia.

The unstable situation makes it possible for criminal elements to engage in the illegal supply of drugs and arms on a large scale across the southern border of Tajikistan. The consequences of these criminal acts have a negative impact, not just in our country or in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), but also far beyond the borders of the CIS.

In this connection, it is appropriate to recall that the leadership of Tajikistan and the States whose military contingents comprise the peace-keeping forces of the CIS have repeatedly requested that these forces be given the status of a United Nations operation. An important reason for that is the accumulated experience of close and constructive collaboration between the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan and the collective peace-keeping forces of the CIS, as well as the border-guard forces in Tajikistan. This collaboration is already one of the most important factors in stabilizing the situation.

The completed process of constitutional reforms and the concomitant peaceful transformation in State power have also contributed to the inter-Tajik settlement. Independent Tajikistan has now acquired a Constitution; the President of the country, who is its guarantor, came to office as the result of popular elections; legislative power is vested in a newly elected Parliament, the Majlisi Oli; all branches of power at the centre, as well as locally, have been strengthened and are working effectively; and the principle of the primacy of the law has made active headway in the country.

It is not sufficient simply to note that all these processes took place in the period between the forty-ninth session and the fiftieth anniversary session of the General Assembly: it is fair to note also that much was achieved with the assistance of the United Nations institutions and specialized agencies.

While there may have been significant progress in the political process, it has proved quite difficult to improve the situation in the national economy in the period of transition without any support from outside, despite the concrete steps that are being taken towards market reforms. A national currency has been introduced, prices have been liberalized, the process of accelerated privatization is under way, and so on.

In other words, the conditions have been created for the development of the economy in the transition period. At the same time, restoring those aspects of daily life that were destroyed by the civil war of 1992 has been extremely difficult. Our health care, education and social security are in critical condition.

The question of the return and settlement of refugees and displaced persons and their social rehabilitation remains crucial. We are grateful for the efforts of specialized agencies of the United Nations and other international organizations for their generosity to our country in helping to resolve the refugee problem.

As is known, Tajikistan does not have access to the sea. However, it possesses significant quantities of natural resources, and it has substantial industrial potential. If our country were to be approached by international financial organizations this would

significantly ease the situation and accelerate the process of reform in the economy.

We call upon the States Members of the United Nations to cooperate in mutually beneficial partnership. Stabilization in the economy of Tajikistan will not only serve to satisfy the socio-economic needs of our people; it will become an important factor for further development of democratic institutions in our country, strengthening the machinery for the defence of human rights and the process of national accord and the consolidation of society.

As an equal member of the world community, the Republic of Tajikistan, to the extent of its potential, will strive to participate actively in international political life.

Tajikistan actively supports the strengthening of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to which it is a party, as well as a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

My country attaches great importance to the development of broad cooperation, not only with the United Nations but also with regional organizations. The Republic of Tajikistan is a striking example of successful practical interaction between two influential international organizations — the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) — in their common interests. The ties between Tajikistan and the OSCE are developing in all major areas of that organization's activity. We also attach great importance to the activity of Tajikistan within the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Our country pays particular attention to the state of affairs in the Commonwealth of Independent States and to the consistent development of that organization's ties with each of its members.

The development of the situation in the central Asian region is of vital importance to our Republic. The Government of my country is a staunch advocate of the parity approach to the settlement of regional political problems and of the closest possible economic integration of the States in its region.

Finally, I should like to say a few words about the situation in a neighbouring country — Afghanistan, which is one of the most dreadful casualties in the aftermath of the cold war. There appears to be no end to the internecine conflict in the territory of this long-suffering nation. We believe that the United Nations and the world community have sufficient political and moral weight to exert a meaningful influence on the parties to this fratricidal conflict with a view to ending the bloodshed as soon as possible. This would undoubtedly be one of the most significant contributions by the United Nations to the establishment of universal peace and security.

The 50-year history of the United Nations has enriched us with the invaluable capacity to live in peace with each other despite our differences. Applying this experience, we must give our peoples high hopes for life in the third millennium. In this sense, we share very much the concept of the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Development". Consonant with this are the joint initiatives of the CIS States at the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly — initiatives in which Tajikistan has participated. The most relevant of these is the convening of an international conference on refugees and migrants in post-Soviet territory.

The package of documented initiatives from the CIS States confirms our will to further integrate the Commonwealth into the international community, and to seek more active participation in the work of United Nations institutions and its specialized agencies. Our joint efforts do not mean that we wish to work in isolation. They simply testify to the fact that there is a great deal that unites us, and there is much we share in common with respect to our development besides having many similar problems.

The entire civilized world, with great concern and indeed with growing alarm about what will happen to future generations, has been observing increasing incidents of international terrorism, religious fanaticism and ultra-nationalism. The task of the world community is to unite efforts to counteract the forces of evil. The tragic events in Tokyo, Oklahoma and Budenovsk show that the world must intensify the struggle in those directions, including foiling the attempts of terrorists to get access to weapons of mass destruction, whether they be nuclear, chemical or any other kind.

International terrorism, drug trafficking and the illicit traffic in weapons, the emergence of "hot spots" here and there on the planet: these are all interconnected phenomena. The pain and suffering of the people in these "hot spots" call for urgent and joint steps to be taken to wage uncompromising war against these demons of the end of the twentieth century.

As the situation now stands, either the principles of high morality and humanity will prevail or the world will be doomed to further suffering. We have no right to allow society to return to the epoch of barbarism.

On the eve of the end of the Second World War the founders of the United Nations dreamed about ruling out any global catastrophes in the future. The 50 years of our Organization's history provide convincing evidence of the constant antagonism between the forces of reason and light and those of injustice and hatred. Today we bow our heads in respect before the tens of millions of people who sacrificed their lives for the sake of peace and justice.

Over the 50 years of its existence the United Nations has essentially saved the world from new universal slaughter. Our common task is now to step into the twenty-first century having learned wisdom from the experience of the past, and having provided our children and grandchildren with durable peace, the right to free development and spiritual progress.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea, His Excellency Don Miguel Oyono Ndong Mifumu.

Mr. Oyono Ndong Mifumu (Equatorial Guinea) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I take great pleasure today in addressing this distinguished world audience on behalf of the delegation of Equatorial Guinea in the context of the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly. I wish first to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal on his election to preside over our work. I wish him every success in the presidency of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. He can always rely on the cooperation and solidarity of my delegation.

This fiftieth session of the Assembly is taking place at a time when we are seeing a radical change of course — a needed one, in our opinion — in the life of the United Nations in today's world.

In its first half-century, as a speaker has already said in this Hall, the United Nations has been a child of its time, the time of the aftermath of the Second World War. It came into being to work for peace, world security and development. Now we must determine whether these objectives have been achieved. Peace meant avoiding war and military conflict. Global security meant preventing the escalation of conflicts. Development meant mobilizing the financial resources required for the reconstruction of the world and to redress its underdevelopment.

As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations we are bound to acknowledge that although the Organization has achieved certain successes in the area of preventing disputes among nations and has taken measures and initiatives to promote the resolution of certain conflicts, peace, security and development are not yet permanent features of daily life in our earthly home.

The fall of the East-West ideological barriers artificially imposed by the cold war aroused expectations of an age of peace in the world. The spread of democracy and the new world-wide awareness of the importance of respect for human rights further heightened these expectations at the beginning of this decade.

In this context my country, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, has striven to achieve these objectives of peace, security and development.

Following the ousting of the dictatorship and the one-party system, our Government, as early as 1979, adopted a consistent and comprehensive strategy which was a reflection of a national consensus in favour of a model of society for the future of our nation that would be based on peace, democracy and development. In this context we have undertaken a series of political reforms fully supported by all forces and currents of opinion in our society.

Since 1992 the Government, following the lead of His Excellency, Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic and Head of State of Equatorial Guinea, has been responsive to the people's aspirations to freedom, democracy and participation in the management of public affairs. With a population of only 420,000 the country has 14 legal political movements. This programme was established and has been satisfactorily implemented since 1993, with municipal elections having been held on 17 September 1995. The Constitution and the electoral timetable that has been established provide for the holding of presidential elections in the coming year, 1996.

However, despite these endeavours and despite my Government's resolve to secure fundamental freedoms for our people on a firm foundation, foreign interests, for their own unavowed purposes, want to see the democratic

process in my country shaped as the saying is "in the image and likeness" of those alien interests.

Since the beginning of the political transition the treatment meted out to Equatorial Guinea by certain States Members of the Organization has been utterly different from that granted to other countries in Central Africa and in the rest of the continent, whose political evolution has been similar to our own, involving in some cases tragic consequences; that leads us to suspect that the disinformation and defamation campaign waged internationally against the Government of Equatorial Guinea is the manifestation of hegemonistic ambitions and struggles for influence that threaten not only the peace and social harmony that prevail in the country but also its territorial integrity.

We do not understand how Equatorial Guinea's democratization process differs from what is going on in other countries in our area. We have said yes to pluralism, democracy and participation. We have said yes to human rights, and we practise respect for human rights. We do not understand why different types of measures are applied to my country. We regret that instead of receiving moral support and solidarity to help us consolidate our achievements, we are subjected to economic blockades and the unilateral suspension of cooperative programmes agreed by convention. Instead of receiving understanding for what could be the result of deficiencies of structure or of democratic culture in the society of Equatorial Guinea as a whole, we are subjected to reproach, intimidation, threats and a humiliating and intolerable interference in our country's internal affairs.

We do not believe that a tragic breakdown of social and economic structures, such as has taken place in the brotherly countries of Liberia, Rwanda, Angola, Somalia and other countries and regions of the African continent, represents the best form of cooperation with and assistance to African peoples.

I wish to declare before this forum of the international community that outside influences are engineering and instigating an internal conflict in my country that would have unforeseeable consequences.

Indeed, some political circles and communications media are waging a campaign from Spain, the old colonial Power, to intensify the differences between the people of Equatorial Guinea, supporting some and harassing others, thus provoking divisions and antagonisms. Even graver is the support offered to the Self-determination Movement of the Island of Bioko, a secessionist group. In addition, a station of Radio Exterior de España has been created and aimed expressly at Equatorial Guinea to carry out a poisonous disinformation campaign deliberately intended to distort the socio-political reality of the country. The broadcasts of Radio Exterior de España are the most disruptive element in the country's democratization process and constitute a Petri dish that spawns acts of violence and the destabilization of Equatorial Guinea's social structures.

We wish to apprise the international community of this matter, and we ask it to request the Spanish Government to put an end to this aggression perpetrated from its territory by the public entity Radio Exterior de España and by certain political circles. Under the pretext of supporting the democratic process under way in our country, those political circles, consisting of Parliamentarians, party and labour leaders, associations and pressure groups, clandestinely support, coordinate and finance secessionist movements and political parties standing in radical opposition to the legitimate Government of Equatorial Guinea. This overt interference is intended to bring about violent political changes in my country.

Clear evidence of this interference can be seen in the current disinformation and discreditation campaign being waged from Spain by those political circles and communications media following the municipal elections held in my country on 17 September last. Those circles planned and illegally financed the electoral campaign of the radical opposition, banded together in the Joint Opposition Platform (POC). They have created confusion by trying to manipulate the electoral results.

Those same Spanish political circles are today trying to manipulate international public opinion by falsely accusing the Government of electoral fraud and violations of human rights. The recent report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur, Mr. Alejandro Artucio, suffices to give the lie to these accusations. My Government complies with the programme and recommendations of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

One cannot credibly claim to be supporting political reform in my country by stirring up antagonism and disputes between the political sectors of my country. One cannot credibly claim to be helping the people of Equatorial Guinea by suspending cooperation in the educational, health and agricultural sectors. One cannot credibly claim to be helping the people of Equatorial

Guinea by inciting the donor community to block projects of proven social effectiveness. We sincerely believe that one cannot help any people by depriving it of the resources and opportunities to improve its living conditions.

My country lives in peace and order. We just need a friendly, sincere and respectful helping hand. We are told that there can be no development without democracy, and we agree. But our experience, which we believe has been shared by other developing countries, is that democracy amid poverty and underdevelopment is a pipe dream. Poverty and underdevelopment breed violence and social and political instability.

We therefore sincerely seek international relations characterized by mutual support and solidarity, not partisan pressure, in order to consolidate this climate that makes democracy and the development of our peoples possible.

My second request, in accordance with what the developing countries have been asking for for over a decade, is that the current unfair international economic system be replaced. Nevertheless, all these global agreements — such as those of the recent World Summit for Social Development, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, and the latest agreements of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) — have served only to bring us to today's sad impasse, which reveals the radical and irreconcilable attitudes of both sides. The so-called developed countries of the North and the developing countries of the South, divided by selfishness, ambition and intolerance, deprive future generations of a better world.

A few days before celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization, there still persists in the United Nations the spirit of a bipolar world dominated by suspicions on both sides, mistrust, discrimination, attitudes of superiority, a lack of political will to develop frank and sincere cooperation and a desire for hegemony in international relations.

The response of the United Nations to the questions asked by those who spoke before me and to the challenges of the new changes on the international stage must contain two indispensable elements. The first is that the United Nations should represent the interests of everyone, by introducing certain structural reforms making it possible to attain the objectives for which it was created. Secondly, we must provide the United Nations with a deeper-going capacity for genuine dialogue between the nations that make it up and speak to the world in a language of understanding.

The necessary dialogue must be global and must encompass all aspects of international relations, be they economic, political or cultural. It is impractical to limit dialogue between nations, regardless of their size and power, since all the countries of the world must take an active part in the dialogue process in order to arrive together at a common and secure destiny, abandoning no one to the abyss of underdevelopment and abject poverty.

This is the challenge of the next 50 years for our Organization. May God bless the United Nations.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bhutan, His Excellency Mr. Dawa Tsering, on whom I now call.

Mr. Tsering (Bhutan): I have the honour to convey to the President of the General Assembly, and through him to all representatives, the warm greetings and good wishes of His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, King of Bhutan, for the success of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I offer Mr. Freitas do Amaral the felicitations of my delegation on his election as President of this historic session. His election to this high office is a tribute to him personally and to his country, Portugal, which has always played an active role in the United Nations. My delegation wishes also to pay a tribute to His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire for his skilful stewardship at the forty-ninth session. His presidency has enhanced the esteem of the international community for him and for Côte d'Ivoire.

We also take this opportunity to welcome the Republic of Palau into our family of nations. Its participation will greatly enrich our Organization.

This session is of especial significance for all of us as we celebrate the passing of 50 years since the birth of the United Nations. It is heartening to note that the grand and lofty vision which inspired our founding fathers still continues to inspire and guide us. More than ever before, we see today the evidence of the collective human will to unite against threats and obstacles to the survival and continued progress of mankind. The participation of no fewer than 150 Heads of State or Government in the special commemorative meeting later this month is glowing testimony to our abiding faith in this world body.

The Intergovernmental High-level Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s was held in New York recently. The least developed countries as a group have not been able to meet many of the objectives of the Programme of Action and their overall socio-economic situation has continued to deteriorate. Some of the factors responsible for this deterioration are, internally, civil strife and natural disasters with their resulting consequences and, externally, the debt problem, low levels of export and an inadequate flow of external finance. These countries have, however, continued to implement wide-ranging reforms and in some countries these efforts have shown positive results. A number of development partners have provided increased support to the least-developed countries, for which we are truly grateful. We believe that the least developed countries have the primary responsibility for their own development, and with the support of the international community they hope to alleviate the desperate plight of their peoples. The Least Developed Countries Division of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development deserves praise for the excellent documentation it provided for the recent intergovernmental meeting on the least developed countries.

Earlier this year, we supported the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This was followed shortly thereafter by several nuclear tests — in what we believe is a contravention of the spirit of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT. We are increasingly concerned about the fate of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and our ultimate goal of eliminating all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

The maintenance of global peace and security still remains the most pressing challenge for the United Nations. It has become the yardstick by which the United Nations is today being judged. Increasingly, concerns are expressed as to whether the United Nations is able to carry out this task. The tragic situations in Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda demonstrate the inability of the international community to put an end to the immeasurable suffering of the innocent victims. Such cases raise an important issue. The number of peace-keeping missions has grown exponentially. The past year has seen 18 peace-keeping missions involving 78,000 peace-keepers. The good news is that the United Nations has a vital, ever-growing role to play in keeping the peace and allowing combatants a breathing period in which to come to the negotiating table. The down side is that the peace-keeping missions are a considerable drain on the finances of the United Nations. Expenditures for peace-keeping operation are now more than three times the entire budget for development. Surely development merits high priority as well.

The most serious obstacles to sustainable global development are the fast pace of population growth and the increasing degradation of the environment. The situation is worst in the countries that are least able to bear the burden and where there is already an appalling disequilibrium between people and resources. The more advanced countries may delay their confrontation with the environmental crisis but unless these issues are addressed today, we may see the collapse of vital resources and climatic changes in many parts of the world and new security threats resulting from poverty and chaos. This is aggravated by the fact that the most significant developments in the world economy are taking place outside the United Nations, and our Organization is being increasingly marginalized on economic, financial and trade issues.

It is important that the world continue to keep investing in people, especially women and children, and that it meet their basic needs in education, health and social welfare. The historic United Nations conferences of this decade on children, environment, human rights, population, social development and women embody the irreversible commitment of the international community to chart a new course for the future. My country is firmly committed to the goals set by these conferences.

I wish to acknowledge the special contribution of the United Nations to the development of my country. The United Nations has been actively involved in every sphere of development in Bhutan, and has been responsible for helping us set out on the right path of sustainable development. Every effort has been made on our part to ensure that all assistance received has been properly utilized and meaningful results achieved. I express the profound gratitude of the people of Bhutan to the donor community, which supports the United Nations development activities. We have particularly benefited from the activities of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Volunteer Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. They have contributed much

to the welfare of our people. We are also grateful to our bilateral donors, particularly India, Switzerland, Japan, Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria, Norway, Kuwait, Germany, Australia, Thailand, and the United Kingdom for their cooperation and support.

The Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System will once again look at streamlining the Organization. Reform of several aspects of the United Nations system is vital, especially as we confront the many challenges of the twenty-first century. There must be better distribution of power within the United Nations. The crippling financial situation caused by large arrears by Member States must be overcome. It is also time to examine the new mechanisms for meeting the financial requirements of the United Nations. My delegation feels that a proper study should be made and reported to the Assembly at an early date. In our view, the innovative idea of a small levy on international air travel proposed by the Foreign Minister of Australia, Senator Gareth Evans, is sound and practical.

We are of the considered view that the Security Council must be expanded to give greater representation to developing countries in order to uphold the principles of equity and justice. Many least-developed countries like Bhutan feel they are being increasingly marginalized by the new agendas and priorities of the United Nations. In our view, the United Nations must represent the interests of all countries equally, and not only those of a privileged few. We therefore support the expansion of the Security Council to facilitate more equitable representation of developing countries and deserving candidates that have emerged since the United Nations was established 50 years ago. As a fellow South Asian nation, and as a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, of which India is by far the largest member, we strongly support India's inclusion in the permanent-member category of the Security Council. India's candidature merits serious consideration on the grounds of equitable geographic representation, the large size and enormous potential of the Indian economy and the fact that one sixth of mankind lives in India.

Before I conclude, I should like to join preceding speakers in paying tribute to the many organizations and individuals that serve with unfailing dedication and commitment to further the principles and purposes of the United Nations. I should like to pay a special tribute to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General of the United Nations; to the late James Grant, former Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), who did so much for the world's children; to the many Blue Helmets who have sacrificed their lives so that others may live in peace and security; and to the host of United Nations personnel and volunteers who have selflessly dedicated their lives to the service of others, sometimes serving under the most trying conditions.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Whannou (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): I am grateful for this opportunity to make a statement in exercise of my delegations right of reply, following the statement made this morning by the head of the delegation of Guinea-Bissau about the formal endorsement by the Group of African States of his country's candidature for one of the non-permanent seats in the Security Council, which is to be filled in elections at this session of the Assembly.

My delegation, out of courtesy, refrained in the general debate from addressing the question of West African candidatures for one of the non-permanent seats on the Security Council. However, we must make the situation clear now by emphasizing that the African Group has also formally recorded the candidature of Benin for that West African seat.

Benin's candidature dates back to 1991, when Benin gave way to another State of the West African subregion that had never served on the Council and was subsequently elected. In 1993 Benin did so a second time, to the benefit of Guinea-Bissau, which then decided to withdraw. Under those circumstances, in 1995 Benin maintains its candidature against that of Guinea-Bissau, which lost its turn by withdrawing in 1993.

My delegation is ready to supply any delegation with any additional information they may desire. Democratically renewed Benin is prepared to serve Africa and the international community in the Security Council, and we know that we can rely on all Member States of the Organization for [illegible]

Mr. Gaussot (France) (*interpretation from French*): Certain delegations, one of them in virulent terms, have once again today referred to the question of nuclear tests. In particular, it has been stated that the recent tests conducted by France were counter to the commitments entered into when the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was extended. In addition, it was said that my country had stated its intention to continue tests without any further details, as if there were a question of an indefinite time period.

My delegation wishes to stress that such a statement of France's attitude does not tally with the facts. First, France has not announced its intention to continue its nuclear testing indefinitely; on the contrary, we have stated our decision to complete it by engaging in a final series limited to a few tests, which will be concluded before 31 May 1996. On that date France will have once and for all renounced all nuclear tests to the extent that other States, as it hopes, undertake to join it under the terms of a nuclear-test-ban treaty.

Secondly, it is not true that the latest round of tests is counter to our commitments. When the Non-Proliferation Treaty was extended France never stated that it would conduct no further testing during the negotiation of a future test-ban treaty. Our commitment was to exercise the utmost restraint, which we have done by strictly limiting our latest test to the number that is technologically indispensable. Utmost restraint, however, does not mean a ban.

Lastly, my delegation recalls, with regard to the wording of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, that France was the first nuclear Power state that it favoured the so-called zero option — that is, a treaty banning all nuclear tests or explosion at any level. It is the ongoing last stage of our testing programme that enables us strongly to advocate that option, which is clearly the strictest and most satisfactory with regard to the scope of a future comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Mr. Laclaustra (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Spanish delegation wishes to respond to certain aspects of the statement made this afternoon by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea.

First of all, my delegation wishes to reiterate firmly and clearly that the policy of the Spanish Government with regard to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea can in no respect be interpreted as interference in the internal affairs of that country. Quite the contrary, for years Spain has been providing Equatorial Guinea with assistance for the reconstruction and development of the country. This assistance focuses principally on the health, education and communications sectors, and is provided for the benefit of the population of Equatorial Guinea.

Moreover, Spain and other countries, together with the European Union and the United Nations, have been cooperating with the authorities of Equatorial Guinea, responding to their requests with a view to the peaceful unfolding of the process of democratization in Equatorial Guinea, including through preparation and monitoring of the recent municipal elections.

Within the framework of the United Nations Charter, Spain is also prepared to scrutinize respect for human rights in Equatorial Guinea in conformity with the international obligations that bind the Government of Equatorial Guinea.

I want to stress that this policy of Spain falls fully within the framework of the principles laid down in the declaration on Equatorial Guinea adopted by the States members of the European Union in April 1992.

In brief, there are three basic elements to Spain's policy towards Equatorial Guinea: cooperation for the economic and social development of the people of Equatorial Guinea; encouragement of political dialogue and the holding of free elections in the context of a peaceful process; and promotion of basic human rights. All of this is in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Thus, the comments made by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea to the effect that Spanish authorities are attempting to interfere in the internal affairs of his country are completely unfounded.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.